Rotary Club of Meadow Ridge

The Four Way Flasher

ROTARY CLUB MEADOW-RIDGE BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA

Vol. 33, Issue 22 **Dec 01, 2026**

Website: MeadowRidgeRotary.ca

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon

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CREATE LASTING IMPACT

NOVEMBER IS ROTARY FOUNDATION MONTH

Happy Birthday	Happy Anniversary

Upcoming Speakers:

Dec 1 Nikita Sharma - How to become an Influential, Respected, Magnetic Leader	Dec 8 AGM	Dec 15 Sarah Brown Are you the "I" in team

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President Eric Mollema presided.

Guests (apart from speaker)

Ana Costillo (former student exchange student, in 2006)

Jordan Simmons – guest of Alex Pope

Guest Speaker: Monica Watson

Presentation: "Have Courage and Encourage – Making the Most of Your Next Chapter"



Monica Watson was introduced as a dental practice consultant and founder of Blossom Dental Consulting. She has more than 25 years of experience working with dental practices and their teams. She is also an active Toastmasters member, an Area Director and a TEDx Surrey speaker coach. Her presentation focused on courage, overcoming personal fears, the importance of encouragement and the difference that support from others can make in helping people achieve things they previously thought impossible.

A Lifelong Fear of Heights

Monica began by admitting that she has a significant fear of heights, known as acrophobia (not arachnophobia – spiders are all right). Her fear dates back to childhood. Her father was an adventurous man who frequently took her on outings and activities. During Expo 86, when she was approximately seven years old, her father would carry her on his shoulders while walking across bridges. Being so high above the ground made her uncomfortable, particularly when trucks passed nearby.

Her father also enjoyed skiing and introduced her to the sport at an early age. Rather than restricting her to beginner slopes, he took her onto more challenging runs. Looking down at the surrounding rocks and cliffs reinforced her fear of heights. Even swimming lessons presented a challenge.

When the instructor introduced the diving board, Monica would walk to the end, become frightened and turn around without jumping.

Although she admired the children who confidently jumped and performed backflips, she could not overcome her fear. She remembered wishing that she could be brave enough to do what the other children were doing.

Her Father's Example of Courage

Years later, Monica's father decided to raise money for BC and Yukon Easter Seals, an organization supporting people with disabilities. His fundraising challenge was to rappel down a skyscraper in downtown Vancouver. Monica was nervous just hearing about the idea. She agreed to accompany him but intended to watch safely from the sidewalk. On the day of the event, her father arrived wearing a bright red and blue Superman costume. Monica described the embarrassment of driving downtown with her father dressed as Superman and walking several blocks with him in full costume. The event attracted considerable attention, and her father successfully rappelled down the building. Watching him from below, she was extremely proud of him. However, she also realized that she could never imagine herself doing something similar. His courage nevertheless planted a seed that would eventually change her attitude toward her own fears.

Deciding to Face Her Fear

Approximately 15 years later, Monica decided that she wanted to challenge herself by undertaking the same type of activity. She remembered the little girl who had been unable to jump from the diving board and decided she wanted to make that little girl proud. Her family and friends were extremely supportive. They encouraged her and helped raise money for the charitable organization. Her sister even accompanied her to an indoor rock-

climbing facility to help prepare her for the experience. Eventually, the day arrived.

The challenge involved rappelling approximately 100 metres down the Guinness Tower in downtown Vancouver, beginning from the 25th floor. Monica was provided with a helmet, harness and safety equipment. She received instructions on operating the rappelling device. During the safety demonstration, the device jammed. Naturally, this did little to improve her confidence. When she asked what would happen if the equipment jammed while she was suspended outside the building, she was told that a rescue team would have to come down and retrieve her. This was hardly reassuring! Nevertheless, she proceeded to the roof.

Standing at the edge of the 25th floor, she was instructed to swing her legs over the side and lean backwards. Every instinct told her not to do it. She remembered the diving board from her childhood and the overwhelming feeling of fear that had prevented her from jumping. With considerable encouragement from the safety personnel, she eventually swung one leg over the edge, followed by the other. Then came the instruction to lean backwards. Although terrified, she reminded herself that she had voluntarily registered for the event and had received tremendous support from her family and friends. Finally, she leaned back and began her descent. Her legs were shaking, and her microphone was bouncing against the building. She was concentrating on controlling her breathing and operating the equipment.

At one point, the photographer instructed her to look up and smile. As a professional speaker, Monica was accustomed to smiling for cameras. Interestingly, when she concentrated on holding still for the photograph, she noticed that her legs stopped shaking. She realized that she could control at least some of her physical reaction to fear. As she descended, she eventually stopped to appreciate the spectacular view of Vancouver. For the first time, she began to enjoy the experience. When she finally reached the ground, she was extremely proud of herself. Her father was waiting, and they celebrated together. She had faced something that had frightened her throughout her life and had succeeded. Her conclusion was simple: She was still afraid, but she did it anyway. Courage had won.

The Importance of Courage and Encouragement

Monica explained that her experience taught her an important lesson. There are many occasions in life when we find ourselves standing at the edge of something unfamiliar or frightening. It may be:

- Having a difficult conversation that we have been avoiding.
- Walking into a room where we do not know anybody.
- Taking on a new responsibility.
- Trying something we have always wanted to do but lacked the confidence to attempt.
- Accepting a leadership position or undertaking a new challenge.

Not every challenge comes with a helmet, harness and safety equipment. Sometimes all we have is the encouragement and support of other people. Monica emphasized that courage is important, but encouragement from others can make an enormous difference. Her father had encouraged her throughout her life. Her sister and friends had also provided support when she decided to confront her fear.

She asked us to consider two things:

First: Identify something that you have been avoiding because it requires courage. Think about one small step you could take during the coming week to move toward accomplishing it.

Second: Think about someone in your life who needs encouragement. Perhaps that person wants to attempt something that you have already experienced or accomplished. Make the effort to support that person. She emphasized that encouragement is not simply telling someone to go ahead and do something. It means being there for them, listening to their concerns and understanding their fears. She recalled the children who had shouted at her to jump from the diving board. That was not really encouragement; they simply wanted their turn! True encouragement involves patience, understanding and support.

Monica's Closing Message

Monica returned to the image of the little girl standing at the end of the diving board, unable to jump. For years, she regarded that experience as evidence of her inability to overcome fear. However, many years later, that same little girl found herself standing on the edge of a skyscraper, equipped with the encouragement and support of family and friends. She encouraged members to give themselves permission to try something meaningful, even if it initially seems frightening. She also reminded them that their actions may inspire someone else who is watching and thinking, "I could never do that." Sometimes our willingness to take a chance and overcome a personal challenge gives someone else the confidence to do the same. Her final message was that we should have the courage to try new things and make the effort to encourage others along the way.

Our President's Practical Take on Monica's Closing Message

We should all beat our fears and have the courage to try new things: *ergo* - **volunteer to become the president-elect or vice-president of our Rotary Club**!

Rotary Youth Exchange Program

Sharon reported that the club is working with the Haney Rotary Club to sponsor a student for the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. The clubs are currently seeking an outgoing student who is in Grade 10 or 11 and interested in spending approximately one academic year abroad. The student would leave in August, live with host families, attend school in another country and return the following year. The experience offers an excellent opportunity to learn about another culture, develop independence and potentially acquire another language. The estimated cost of the exchange is approximately $9,000–$10,000. The committee is aware that this expense could discourage interested students, and therefore it suggested that the clubs undertake fundraising and provide financial assistance to ensure that the opportunity is accessible to deserving students regardless of their family's financial circumstances.

The exchange program also requires the clubs to host an incoming exchange student, although the student's country of origin has not yet been determined. Sharon encouraged members to identify potential candidates and inform interested Grade 10 and 11 students and their parents about the opportunity. The club agreed that finding a suitable student should be the first priority, with fundraising and financial arrangements to be addressed thereafter.

Happy and Sad Dollars

At our recent fundraiser held at the Legion, **Alex and Barb** purchased a "Little Library Outdoor Box" (similar to the one shown below), and Alex says that it is all set up and registered online. People are contacting them and dropping off books from everywhere!



Mark V. expressed his appreciation to **Mark & Pauline F.** for the fantastic charcuterie and wine tasting event at their home last week (thereby echoing the thoughts of all who attended!).





If we don't see **Debbie** and **Kathy** for a while in the coming few weeks it will because they will be escaping with their families to Mexico shortly.

Clint is happy (even excited) about the fact that Peyton will be coming home for 2 weeks over the holidays.

Upcoming Meetings and Club Events

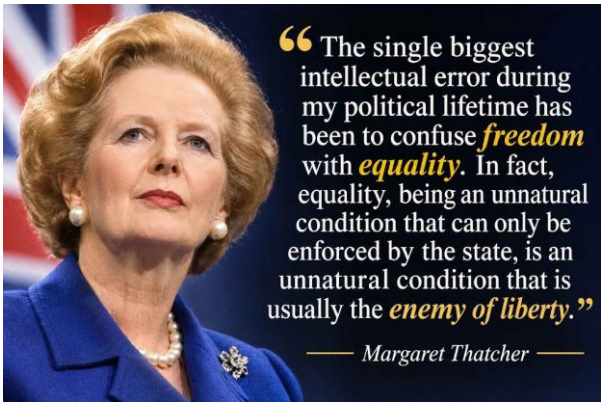
Dec 9: Club AGM (for election of new Executive).

Dec 12: Christmas party at Clint's home.

Dec 22: Christmas gift exchange at regular Club meeting. (Bring a wrapped $20 gift suitable for any recipient (man or woman). However, the emphasis is not on the value of the gift but on the creativity of the wrapping and maintaining the element of surprise!

Dec 29: In lieu of regular club meeting, a Pub Hub at 5:30 pm at the Night Owl.

President's Closing Quote



Submitted by Laurie Anderson